

the hearth

URBANA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

www.urbanatheologicalseminary.org

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Alumni Spotlight—Teresa Pratt



Dave & Teresa; grandchildren--Elsie, Theo, Collins

What led you to study at UTS?

When our youngest son was entering college, I saw that as an opportunity to pursue a dream of more fully engaging in ministry. UTS had a booth at our church's health fair, where I got to chat with some of the incredible faculty & staff. When they offered the option of beginning as a "visiting student" for the first semester, that appealed to me...a great on-ramp! After that first semester, I was hooked! The small class sizes, personal interaction with faculty & classmates, and the ability to attend part-time (I took one class per semester) while working full-time—all only an hour from home, made pursuing a dream very doable. It was also very affordable.

What prompted you to pursue a Seminary degree/certificate?

I had been a volunteer Faith Community Nurse in my church, Champaign New Horizon, for 7 years and loved it. Incorporating the spiritual aspect of healthcare into my work was a calling. Pursuing a Graduate Certificate in Christian Studies helped develop my love of God through His Word, recognize and solidify the foundational work of Christ in my life, and equipped me for God's purposes in my current ministry.

Continued on page 2...

From the Presidents Pen...

I'm grateful! God is consistently faithful to us.

It's August now—I'm thankful for the changed pace of Summertime, as well as excited as I anticipate the approaching Fall Semester—new classes, new students, returning students. The Seminary has been blessed with a wonderfully creative Faculty, and a perceptive and wise Board.

I'm hopeful that the pandemic will clear up soon, but I'm also glad for the alternate means of carrying out this ministry that God has provided should it stay longer than any of us would like. I'm grateful for Zoom! (I never thought I'd put that sentence together!) But I am. In the hardest of seasons, Zoom has exceeded all our expectations as Faculty and as students in making continued training at a high level of impact possible.

And being largely online has facilitated reaching people distant from this region in the center of the US. I also look forward to seeing the diversity of our students continue to deepen and thrive—even in unexpected ways, such as the trend for more and more people come into our circle to audit classes alongside those enrolling for credit and seeking degrees. It's always delightful to welcome people who simply want to go deeper, to grow spiritually, and to know Jesus Christ more profoundly.

Bottom line—I thank God for his provisions, for his care for this ministry and its community of people, and for the ways he keeps guiding us in defining our role in the Body of Christ as we move into the future.

In and for Christ,

Ken

To listen to a radio interview with Dr. Cuffey on WGNN go to <https://www.greatnewsradio.org/> and select the August 3 segment of *Mark and Friends*.

Can you describe learning something particularly eye opening or especially impactful?

I took an independent study class called "Sabbath, Rest, & Renewal" one semester. It was during a time that I was burning the candle at both ends and my workaholic/perfectionism was out of control. I was attempting to apply what I was learning instead of it being just head knowledge. Needless to say, I ended up having to request two extensions to complete this one course! But God spoke to me deeply during this time and helped me break through some behavioral patterns that are still benefiting me & my family today.

What are some strengths of the faculty, classes, and the Seminary community?

The faculty, administration, and staff at UTS are real, authentic, and FUN! Each professor is knowledgeable and passionate about teaching students of any age. I have always felt that each of them had my best interests in mind. They model Christ-like character consistently. They are empowering and engaging. I feel like I'm with family at Urbana Seminary. The "Training Through Travel (TtT) opportunities are incredible learning experiences. Today I have the privilege of serving on the Urbana Theological Seminary Board of Trustees and am delighted to make an impact on our communities, nation, and world.

How has what you learned at UTS benefited you? (in your work? life situation? spiritual walk?)

In our retirement, my husband and I are currently leading a Celebrate Recovery ministry through our church. The exposure to multiple traditions through UTS has been highly beneficial in leading this interdenominational ministry. When I understand where others are coming from, my caring & compassion increase. The world gets smaller and a little less complicated when there is heart connection with God and others. People.Need.Jesus. Jesus calls us to go and make disciples.



What would you say to folks that are unsure about taking classes or pursuing a degree from UTS?

Take that step of faith and try it as a visiting student for a semester. . . taste & see! Currently the on-line option provides incredible accessibility that wasn't present 2 years ago. There are also audit vs credit options. Regularly there are

"Taste of Seminary" options. I'm confident you will be blessed beyond all measure. Glory to God!

Teresa was awarded a Graduate Certificate of Christian Studies in 2015. Like to know more about our programs? Contact our Dean, Dr. Melody Green at mgreen@urbanatheologicalseminary.org.



During the time that we hope will be looked back on as the worst of the pandemic, Urbana Seminary hosted our sixth Tolkien conference—our first one online! On February 6, over 200 people from five countries logged in to zoom to join our free online Tolkien conference.

The online conference involved six speakers, who live on two different continents. Because two of the best parts of conferences are meeting new people and talking about ideas, we even had two places set up for people to do this: in the zoom chat, as well as in an experimental "hallway"—a social media platform set up so that people can pop in and out of groups and wander around. We were even able to replicate some people's favorite part of a conference: the exhibitor's hall with places to shop—all online, of course, but our speakers' books as well as conference swag are still listed on the Tolkien conference website.

Our six speakers presented on Tolkien's life, work and beliefs from a variety of angles, providing quite a bit of material for further thought and discussion. The day started with Dr. Charlie Starr, Associate Professor of English at Alderson Broaddus University in West Virginia and author of several

A sampling of the pieces submitted to our Conference Art Gallery

<https://tolkienconference.com/art-gallery/>



Captains of the West by Will Coats



Storyteller by Sarah Emtage



Thousand Year War © 2002 Roberto Sabas



"And the ship went out into the high sea..." by Molly Zakrajsek

books including *The Faun's Bookshelf: C. S. Lewis on Why Myth Matters*, with a presentation on the friendship between Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, looking at how this friendship shaped both Lewis's faith and Tolkien's writing.

The day continued with Dr. Craig Boyd, professor of Philosophy and Humanities at St. Louis University. Dr. Boyd, whose most recent publication is *The Virtues: A Very Short Introduction* from Oxford University Press, gave a thought-provoking presentation on the ways that two characters in *The Lord of the Rings*, Saruman and Gandalf, are excellent demonstrations of what St. Augustine describes as good and evil orators in *On Christian Doctrine*, and present Tolkien's understanding of the importance of Classical rhetoric and its relevance to a Christian understanding of the integrity of a speaker.

Two other speakers, Dr. Sarah Waters from the University of Buckingham and Oxford-Brooks University in the UK, and Dr. Joe Ricke, former director of the Center for the Study of C. S. Lewis & Friends at Taylor University, also used older writings to illuminate Tolkien's work. Dr. Waters looked at the idea of personal sacrifice in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and discussed how it applies to three of the less important characters in Tolkien's work: Sam Gamgee, Merry Brandybuck, and Pippin Took. Dr. Ricke had the audience laughing while examining the way that ideas about fate and freewill that are present in *The Lord of the Rings* reflect those in medieval writings, especially *Beowulf* and the writings of Chaucer.

The other two speakers each brought something completely different to the conversation. Matthew Green, an IT professor at Waukesha County Technical College, revealed Tolkien's complicated view of technology, questioning the common assumption that Tolkien was against it all. Artist William Coats, on the other hand, shared his amazingly beautiful artwork that has been inspired by Tolkien.

If you are interested in information about next year's conference, are interested in catching videos of these speakers, or even want to see the store that we set up, check us out at www.tolkienconference.com!

Looking for swag?

Some of the merchandise available from the conference store.



Back to School Picnic



Join us for this year's **Back to School Picnic!**

Everyone is welcome—
Students,
Alumni,
faculty,

friends of the
seminary—bring your families as well! The more the merrier!

Saturday, August 21

**Food will be served at 5:00 PM
at Lake of the Woods Rotary Hill
Pavilion in Mahomet.**

We will provide pulled pork for sandwiches as well as beverages and paper goods.

Bring a dish if you can; if you can't, we would still love to see you!

Feel free to bring outdoor games to play, as well. This is an excellent place for alumni to catch up with former professors, for students to catch up with fellow students and professors, for new students or people thinking about taking classes to meet people taking classes as well as professors, and for friends of the seminary to come on out and meet other people interested in the school!

**We hope you can
join us!**





We bring a quality education to our students... wherever they are!

“ I have been a pastor and missionary for over 40 years, and as such, have attended many fine lectures and training sessions. However, one of the best ever has been the class on Acts taught by Dr. Ken Cuffey of UTS. In a story-like manner, Dr. Cuffey leads us every week in walking with the growth and development, the challenges and struggles of the apostles and the young Church they birthed and nurtured. Whether nor not they are a vocational minister, every follower of Christ would greatly benefit in learning and living in this experience offered by UTS. ”

Rob Gill, auditing student

Equipping you to love, know, and serve God.

Spring Taste of Seminary

This spring's Taste of Seminary lecture series was held over zoom, attracting people from many states as well as Iceland and Canada! The series began with Dr. Todd Daly discussing his recently-published book *Chasing Methuselah: A Christian Perspective on Slowing Aging*. Dr. Judy Webb followed this with a talk titled "The Infinitely Diverse Music and Art of Worship" in which she used video clips to discuss worship across cultures, genres and art forms. The third talk was given by Nia Klein, a guest lecturer, on The Neuroscience of Spiritual Formation. The final presentation was a talk that Dr. Melody Green had previously given at the Icelandic C. S. Lewis conference on redemption in children's literature. Three of the lectures were recorded, so if you would like to watch (or re-watch) any, you can find them at:

Taste of Seminary playlist (all three) -

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYSwWhmqGGEAo0cMFTXncGZpFmciav2hy)

[list=PLYSwWhmqGGEAo0cMFTXncGZpFmciav2hy](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYSwWhmqGGEAo0cMFTXncGZpFmciav2hy)

Todd - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3J0nSxBy0as&list>

Nia - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlI867ov6O8>

Melody - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDR73L6lu1E>

Our Fall Taste of Seminary will also be held online over Zoom so anyone can join us. Watch for further information on our website. Taste will be held the four Tuesdays of October.

Why a Class on Reading and Praying Scripture?

By Dr. Peter Spychalla

The religious poet, a worshipper of Israel's God, exclaimed, "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long" (Psalm 119:97). Biblical authors commend, through command and example, sustained reflection on God, His character, His works, His ways, His plans, and His instruction as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and upon truth and wisdom discerned in human life and from the world around. This robust, full-orbed, biblical meditation results in "being transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2), and is a vehicle for communing with, and adoring, the Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—revealed in Scripture. Followers of Christ throughout the centuries—Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant—developed diverse devotional practices involving biblical meditation. The shaping of each practice, and the terminology used, reflects the unique time, place, culture, situatedness, and spiritual emphases and sensitivities of the people of God in that specific setting.

This devotional practice of reading and praying Scripture for spiritual transformation is a fruitful complement to, and builds upon, a healthy spiritual diet of regularly listening to solid, sound preaching of the Word of God, and to engaging in academically-rigorous, theologically-faithful Bible study, privately and in groups. This meditation on Scripture helps us fulfill the command, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Consider joining us for the course, "Reading and Praying Scripture for Spiritual Transformation (Lectio Divina)." We will join the Hebrew poet in loving God's law and "meditating on it all day long" (Psalm 119:97).

Faculty Speaking Engagements

Ken Cuffey

- Jan 17 Twin City Bible Church (Urbana,IL) Jonah 1:17-2:10
- June 13 Twin City Bible Church (Urbana, IL) Ephesians 2:1-10
- July 18 Hessel Park Christian Reformed Church (Champaign, IL) Ephesians 2:11-22

Todd Daly

- Feb 13 Fellows meeting for the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity, "Chasing Methuselah," based on his book
- Jun 6 Hessel Park Reformed Church, Sermon on the Mount
- Jun 23 Interview by the Stead Center for Ethics and Values at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary.
<https://www.steadcenter.com/instead>
- June 25 Paper at the annual bioethics conference at the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity "Asceticism Old and New: A Theological Critique of the 'New Asceticism' for the Aging Body"

Melody Green

- Feb 6 Chaired Urbana Theological Seminary Tolkien conference
- May 11 Taste of Seminary: "Redemption in Children's Books"
- Jul 4 Quest Church "What is a Parable?"
- Jul 11 Hessel Park Christian Church "The King of Glory"
- Jul 14 Experience Soul Care Podcast "Finding God in Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Mythology"

Mike McQueen

- Jan 3 Rantoul Community Church
- Mar 28 Chinese Christian Church of Peoria
- Apr 11 Chinese Bible Church of Springfield
- Apr 25 Cornerstone Fellowship - Urbana
- May 16 Chinese Bible Church of Springfield
- Jun 13 Chinese Christian Church of Peoria
- Jun 27 Stratford Park Bible Chapel - Champaign
- Jul 11 Cornerstone Fellowship - Urbana

Urbana Seminary is here to give support to the local church. Whether we can help by connecting you with a speaker for Sunday morning or providing resources such as our extensive library, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Do you do some of your shopping on Amazon?

If so, you can donate to Urbana Theological Seminary while you shop! Go to www.smile.amazon.com/ch/37-1332634 for more information.

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

A Grand Adventure!

This last year and a half has brought us at Urbana Seminary many new adventures as we negotiate the changing landscape of teaching in a pandemic. One exciting opportunity it has brought us is the chance to have new students who live in other states as well as other countries! This last year we have had students logging in from Canada, Honduras, India and other places. As we look at potential directions for the future, one thing has become quite clear: in some way, we are going to need to maintain an online presence.

Since we at Urbana Seminary are also committed to the live classroom experience, we have been excited these last few months to explore options to help us meet both goals at the same time. One way we have found to do this is to create a permanent hybrid classroom, in which students online will be able to interact with both the professor and the classmates thanks to exciting and fun new technology such as meeting owls and smart markers. If you would like to help us make this happen, feel free to contact Avon Morgan at amorgan@urbanatheologicalseminary.org to discuss how you can be a part of this new adventure!

Pray for the Seminary

We treasure your prayers for the ministry of the Seminary. Here's some ways that you can pray for us.

- Praise for a good summer semester in classes! Pray for students finishing up the semester—for **fruitful work** that equips them well.
- For **strong enrollment** for the Fall—That the Lord would connect new students with the Seminary's ministry, that the Lord would lead many to deepen their faith and understanding here at the Seminary.
- For **creativity in teaching** to be able to maximize the equipping and community whether in-person or on Zoom! Praise for how Zoom technology has exceeded expectations in creating an effective learning environment.
- For Faculty and Board as they **re-visit the Mission and Vision** in light of all we've learned in the course of the last few years with **online classes and Zoom**.
- For the lengthy (years long) processes with **accreditation** to continue to move forward well. For God to raise up many **new monthly and regular givers to the Founders Fund**.

Your generosity helps us keep academically excellent graduate education accessible and affordable.

Thank You!

TURKEY & GREECE

In the Footsteps of Paul March 8-20, 2022



Hello Travelers! We are offering a trip to Turkey and Greece which will open new understanding and appreciation of Paul's ministry and the early church. Dr. Ken Cuffey will present a wide and enthralling account of the biblical texts and history, culture, geography and archeology as we follow Paul's footsteps from March 8 to 20, 2022. We will be in good hands. Our trip is coordinated with an expert and experienced Turkish travel company who specialize in arranging Biblical tours and are knowledgeable of local customs and travel accommodations. Travel with our group will allow a personal and immensely satisfying experience as we travel back in time and understand the people, places, and customs of the early Christians and churches. We will visit six of the seven churches of Revelation. Please let us know of your interest by emailing me, Dee Hoiem at travel@urbanatheologicalseminary.org. I look forward to all we will learn and experience as we behold the places where God met and empowered the early church. ~ Dee Hoiem

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An Informational Meeting will be held Tuesday, August 31 at 7:00 PM over Zoom. Please contact Dee to receive your Zoom link!



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Email for customized group & individual tour requests: info@tutkutours.com

Fall 2021 Course Schedule

How Should We Live? The Jesus Movement in Ephesus

Dr. Kenneth Cuffey

Thursday 6:00 - 9:00 pm Online

What was it like to follow Christ in an epicenter of secular power and false spirituality? Why was Ephesus a strategic center for the Gospel mission of the 1st century church? What can we learn from this for today?

An introduction to 1st century AD Ephesus as an early backdrop for the faith of Jesus' followers. This will facilitate our thinking about how we should live out our new life in Christ individually and in community today. Focusing on everything in the New Testament relating to the city of Ephesus in its context, this class will begin by observing how the church was established in the shadow of paganism and superstition (Acts), then will explore Paul's letters to the church as a window into understanding our life in Christ (Ephesians, 1 Timothy, and 2 Timothy). From there, the class will examine John's ministry in the city and the letter to Ephesus in Revelation.

Old Testament Survey

Dr. Kenneth Cuffey

Wednesday 6:00 - 9:00 pm Twin City Bible Church

How does the whole Old Testament fit together to tell the story of God's work to save us? An introduction to the Old Testament/ Hebrew Bible within the context of the history of Israel and the ancient Near East.

“ *I have been a Christian and a Bible reader for most of my life, but after taking the Old Testament Survey course at UTS I feel for the first time that the Hebrew Scriptures are a deep well of vibrant life. The course will provide you with the tools and enough historical background to uncover a beauty and depth of wisdom most of us completely miss in our Bibles. You will come to a fuller understanding of the Old AND New Testaments and perhaps even encounter God in a fresh and exciting way.* ”

Adam Krause, M.A. R. Student

Understanding Evangelicalism: A History

Dr. Joseph Thomas

Thursday 6:00 - 9:00 pm Online

Modern American Evangelicalism is in a crisis. How did it get here? What is to be done? *Understanding Evangelicalism: A History* will trace the origins and development of evangelicalism from 17th century German Pietism and English Puritanism to Billy Graham and into the current state of the movement in the 21st century. To better understand our current moment, this course will flesh out the spiritual renewal aspect of evangelicalism's history and evaluate the moments when it has lost its luster.

Christian Bioethics

Dr. Todd Daly

Only meets four weekends:

Aug 27-28, Sep 24-25, Oct 29-30, Dec 3-4

Friday, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm;

Saturday, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm Online

Our increasing technological powers over nature are continuing to reshape the discipline of medicine in ways that could scarcely have been foreseen a century ago. Christian Bioethics is concerned with addressing these, and related issues concerning medicine, the human body, and flourishing in light of the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. In this course we will survey the history of medicine and the Christian contribution to it while learning to make biblically-informed, theologically sound judgments about medical and moral issues at the edges of life, human identity, justice, and well-being.

What's a Christian to do with Harry Potter?

Dr. Melody Green

Wednesday 6:00 - 9:00 pm Online

Harry Potter has now been around for twenty years, and while some Christians condemn the books as evil, or even satanic, others praise them for their good Christian values. This class will look at the issues involved in this controversy, exploring the ways people come to these two different conclusions. Theology, history, even an exploration of how language works are all topics that will come into play. The class will require reading (or having read) all seven Harry Potter books, as well as other materials.

Theology II

Dr. Todd Daly

Monday 6:00 - 9:00 pm Online

What should I believe? An overview of the Christian doctrines of the Holy Spirit, the work of Christ and salvation, the church as the Body of Christ, and the end times.

World Christian Movement: A Gateway to Mission

Dr. Michael McQueen

Monday 6:00 - 9:00 pm Online

A survey of the global cause of Christ in Christian missions. This course will use selected materials from *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* courses of the U.S. Center for World Mission to explore the biblical, theological, and historical foundations for missions. We will look at crucial issues of cross-cultural ministry, recent developments in methods, future trends in missions, and last but not least, application in the local church.

Reading and Praying Scripture for Spiritual Transformation

Dr. Peter Spsychalla

Tuesday 6:00 - 8:00 pm Online

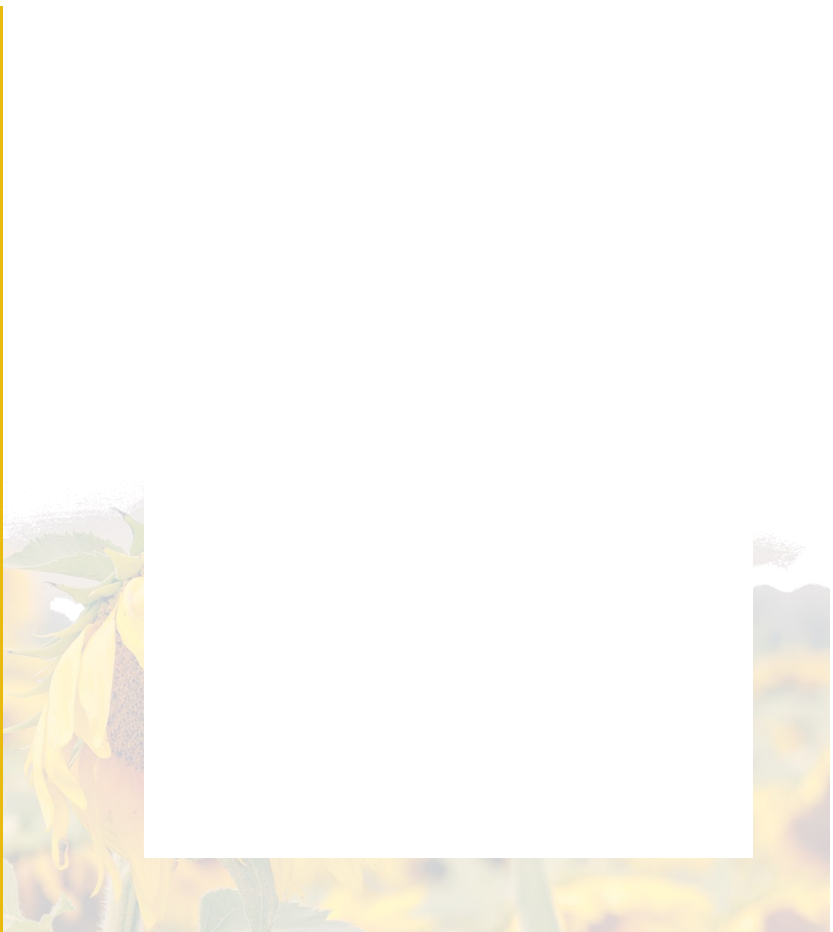
Philosophy and technique in reading and praying Scripture for spiritual transformation rather than reading merely for information. Approaches and skills for meditating on Scripture, praying Scripture, applying Scripture, and encountering God through the reading and praying of the Scripture. Historic traditions and contemporary practice of *lectio divina* (spiritual reading of scripture).

If you are planning to audit a course, but would like to add significant value to your learning experience, consider signing up for **Seminary CEUs** that can be tallied to lead to an **Endorsement**. This involves completing a few assignments (less than must be completed to earn credit, but more than simply attending and listening as an audit) and then receiving validation that you have the CEUs.

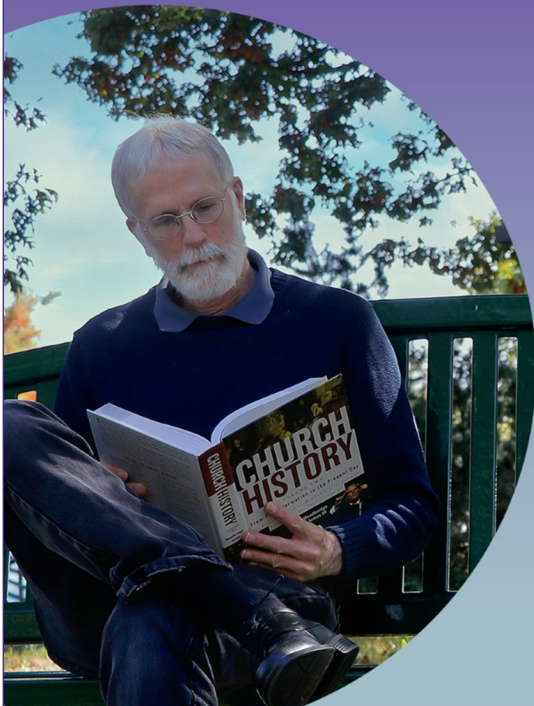
Contact Dr. Melody Green at mgreen@urbanatheologicalseminary.org for further information or to register.



What does this juggler have to do with Urbana Theological Seminary? Watch for our next issue of *The Hearth* to find out!



Why Urbana Seminary?



“ Thanks to Urbana Theological Seminary, I have learned more about the Bible, theology, and church history over the past six or seven years than I had in the previous 50-some years. ”

Doug Peterson

Whether you are auditing a class for personal growth or fun, or pursuing a degree, Urbana Seminary equips you to love, know, and serve God better. Offering an education that is accessible, affordable, and academically excellent.

Register now for Fall Classes!